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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent to which negative behaviors that could affect the supervisory climate for student teachers were practiced by college supervisors and supervising teachers. Researchers collected data over two years with two different sets of student teachers. During the 1996-1997 school year, 21 student teachers participated, and during the 1997-1998 school year, 22 student teachers participated. The college supervisors were the same both years. Student teachers were asked to complete a survey about their experiences with the classroom supervising teacher and the college supervising teacher. The survey focused on a variety of supervisor behaviors. Data analysis indicated that the frequency with which either group of supervisors used negative behaviors was minimal. The college professors used fewer negative behaviors than the cooperating teachers. Overall, there were no differences in the supervisory behaviors of the two groups associated with human relations and communications skills. There was a difference, however, in behaviors associated with vision and knowledge, but no differences surfaced for conflict management, administrative ability, decisiveness, and judgment. An appendix presents the survey. (SM)

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SUPERVISORY CLIMATE

BEHAVIORS THAT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE SUPERVISORY CLIMATE OF STUDENT TEACHERS

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Behaviors That Adversely Affect the Supervisory Climate of Student Teachers

Introduction

The supervisory climate that develops between student teachers and their supervisors from the university and classroom setting can positively or adversely affect their ability to become effective teachers. Whether this climate is positive or negative could depend on the behavior of the supervising teacher and college supervisor as they interact with the student teacher. The literature is full of information on types of behaviors and skills supervisors should utilize in their interactions with subordinates. Many organizations have developed lists of essential areas in which educational leaders should possess skills. In addition to states, universities, and national organizations, there is a plethora of writers/scholars who have their own ideas concerning what educational leaders should be able to do or the type of training they should have (Bulach and Pickett, 1995; Hallinger and McCary, 1992; Hallinger, Leithwood, and Murphy, 1993; Hoyle, 1991; Lumsden, 1993).

The focus in much of the literature, however, is on what educational leaders should do rather than on what they should not do. According to Davis (1998), those behaviors that cause most supervisors to get in trouble with their subordinates are in the area of human relations. The relationship that is established between a student teacher and a supervising teacher and the college supervisor is highly dependent on human relations. An awareness of those behaviors that can cause good human relations to deteriorate is important. This theory is based on the premise that the use of behaviors a supervisor should not use will have a greater effect on the supervisory climate than those behaviors a supervisor should use. Also, it is based on the belief that the effect of a negative behavior is far greater than the effect of a number of positive behaviors (Bulach, Boothe, and Pickett, 1998).

A positive supervisory climate should improve the effectiveness of the student teacher in promoting student learning. According to Pipho (1998) "the single largest factor affecting academic growth of student populations is differences in effectiveness of individual classroom teachers" (p.341). The student teaching experience is a major influence on the professional development of student teachers and could affect their effectiveness and ability to influence student learning. Richardson (1998) and Sparks (1998) both cite the importance of professional development for teachers as a way to improve student learning. Consequently, there is a need to create an environment or supervisory climate that will increase the likelihood that the result of the student teaching experience will be an effective teacher.

The need to create this environment is even more important due to recent events in the State of Georgia where this research was conducted. In order to address the quality of teachers produced in their institutions, the University System of Georgia has taken bold steps to guarantee the quality of its teaching graduates. In March, 1998, the system published a list of principles aimed at improving teacher preparation at the 15 state institutions that provide teacher education programs. According to a recent article in the Atlanta Journal

Constitution, one of the principles is the guarantee that, if within two years, school officials believe a teacher is not doing well, that teacher can be sent back to the university system for additional training in the weak areas at no cost to the teacher or the district. In view of this guarantee, and considering the impact of the student teaching situation on a teacher's future effectiveness, there is a need to investigate areas that could affect the student teaching experience. It is believed that the supervisory climate created by the college supervisor and the classroom supervising teacher is crucial for the student teaching experience. Based on the research of Bulach et al. (1998), who investigated mistakes supervisors make in their interactions with subordinates, it is further believed that negative behaviors will have a greater impact on the supervisory climate than positive behaviors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which negative behaviors that could affect the supervisory climate for student teachers are practiced by the college supervisor and the supervising teacher. While it is believed by college supervisors and supervising teachers that their use of negative behaviors is infrequent, there is no data on which to base these beliefs. Using the research of Bulach et al. (1998), the negative behaviors used most frequently by supervisors in interacting with their subordinates were grouped according to the following climate variables: human relations, communications, vision/knowledge, conflict management, administrative ability, and decisiveness/judgment. Based on their research and the purpose of this study the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypotheses:

#1 The frequency with which college supervisors and supervising teachers use negative behaviors will be minimal.

#2 There would be no overall difference in the behaviors associated with negative behaviors for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#3 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with human relations for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#4 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with communications for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#5 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with vision and knowledge for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#6 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with conflict management for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#7 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with administrative ability for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#8 There would be no difference in the behaviors associated with decisiveness and judgment for college supervisors and supervising teachers.

#9 There would be a significant positive relationship between the variables measured by the survey.

Definitions:

Supervisory climate is the psychological environment that exists between the supervisor and the student teacher as a result of supervisors' use or disuse of negative behaviors in their interactions with the student teacher.

Negative behaviors are those behaviors supervisors should try to avoid as they carry out their leadership responsibilities (Bulach et al., 1998).

Human relations are those behaviors associated with a supervisors' ability to meet the human or people needs of the student teacher being supervised.

Communication are those behaviors that are involved in giving and receiving information.

Vision and knowledge are those behaviors that affect instruction in some way.

Conflict management refers to those behaviors that are used to avoid conflict.

Administrative ability are those behaviors used to manage the behavior of subordinates.

Decisiveness and judgment refers to those behaviors used when action on something is taken.

Methodology

The independent variable for this causal comparative design was the type of supervision. The dependent variables were the overall supervisory climate as well as the six variables that measure the overall supervisory climate. The data was collected over a two year period with two different sets of student teachers.

Subjects

During the 1996-1997 school year, 21 student teachers were involved in the study, and during the 1997-1998 school year 22 student teachers were involved with this study. The college supervisors were the same for both years. One was a male professor and one was a female professor. Both had three or more years of experience supervising student teachers.

Instrumentation

The instrument (see Appendix A) was developed based on the research of Bulach et al. (1998). The negative behaviors that were identified as mistakes supervisors make were incorporated in a survey titled "A Survey of the Leadership Behaviors of College Supervisors and Supervising Teachers." The survey has 53 items with the first four collecting demographic data. Students respond to a five-point scale ranging from "never" to "always." Never is scored as a "1.0" and always is scored as a "5.0." The variable "human relations" is measured by nine items. The variable "communications" is measured by seven items. The variable "vision/knowledge" is measured by nine items. The variable "conflict management" is measured by seven items. The variable "administrative ability" is measured by eleven items. The variable "decisiveness/judgment" is measured by six items. The reliability and internal consistency was tested using the Cronbach alpha. A correlation coefficient of .96 indicates that the instrument has excellent reliability. Further analysis needs to be completed to determine construct validity.

Procedures

Before going to their student teaching assignments, student teachers were required to purchase a Student Teaching Handbook and attend an informational session regarding expectations and procedures. They also received inservices on school law, classroom climate, organizational skills, and various teaching methods throughout their college coursework. Classroom supervising teachers also received Student Teaching Handbooks and met with college supervisors to review expectations before the arrival of student teachers.

The data was collected during a meeting with all student teachers (N = 43). They were given one answer sheet and instructed to complete it based on their experience with the classroom supervising teacher. Once these were collected, a second answer sheet was distributed and they were instructed to respond to the same set of questions regarding their college supervising teacher. Due to time constraints some student teachers left the meeting and did not complete the survey on college supervisors' behaviors (N = 29).

Method of Analysis

The first 8 hypotheses were tested using the t-test for independent groups. The last hypothesis was tested using the Pearson product-moment correlation.

Results

The scores for college professors on leadership behaviors associated with mistakes supervisors can make ranged from a low of 1.17 to a high of 1.66. The scores for supervising teachers on leadership behaviors associated with mistakes supervisors can make ranged from a low of 1.33 to a high of 2.35. Scores close to 1.0 mean that a supervisor "never" exhibits that behavior while scores close to 2.0 mean the supervisor "seldom" exhibits that behavior. College supervisors had no scores that were 2.0 or higher while supervising teachers had three scores that were 2.0 or higher. Since there were no scores that approached 3.0 or higher which showed that supervisors sometimes exhibit those behaviors hypothesis #1 was accepted. Hypothesis # 1 was as follows: the frequency with which college supervisors and supervising teachers make mistakes would be minimal.

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for all behaviors measured by the survey yielded a t-score of 8.4, which was significant at the .0001 level (see table # 1). Consequently, hypothesis #2, which stated that there would be no overall difference in the behaviors associated with mistakes for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was rejected.

Table #1

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Mistakes

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teachers	1.61	.20	43	8.40	.0001
College Supervisors	1.33	.12	29		

$p < .05$

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with human relation skills yielded a t-score of 0.4, which was not significant at the .05 level (see table #2). Consequently, hypothesis #3, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with human relations for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was accepted.

Table #2

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Human Relation Skills

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	14.09*	6.2	43	0.43	.68
College Supervisor	13.48	5.8	29		

$p > .05$

*the mean scores reported in this table and the following tables are the average scores for that category of behaviors. Since some categories have 11 behaviors and other categories six or more, the averages for each table will vary.

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with communication skills yielded a t-score of 1.4, which was not significant at the .05 level (see table #3). Consequently, hypothesis #4, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with communications for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was accepted.

Table #3

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Communication Skills

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	11.14	5.8	43	1.38	.17
College Supervisor	9.45	3.6	29		

$p > .05$

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with vision and knowledge yielded a t-score of 2.0, which was significant at the .05 level (see table #4). Consequently, hypothesis #5, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with vision and knowledge for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was rejected.

Table #4

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Vision and Knowledge

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	14.55	7.6	43	2.00	.05
College Supervisor	11.45	4.3	29		

$p < .05$

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with conflict management skills yielded a t-score of 1.9, which was not significant at the .05 level (see table #5). Consequently, hypothesis #6, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with conflict management skills for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was accepted.

Table #5

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Conflict Management

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	11.69	6.3	43	1.94	.06
College Supervisor	9.17	3.5	29		

$p > .05$

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with administrative skills yielded a t-score of 1.8, which was not significant at the .05 level (see table #6). Consequently, hypothesis #7, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with administrative skills for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was accepted.

Table #6

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Administrative Skills

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	17.32	9.8	43	1.70	.092
College Supervisor	13.83	5.6	29		

$p > .05$

A t-test comparison of college supervisors' and supervising teachers' scores for behaviors associated with decisiveness and judgment skills yielded a t-score of 1.2, which was not significant at the .05 level (see table #7). Consequently, hypothesis #8, which stated that there would be no difference in the behaviors associated with decisiveness and judgment for college supervisors and supervising teachers, was accepted.

Table #7

A Comparison of College Supervisors' and Supervising Teachers' Behaviors Associated with Decisiveness and Judgment

	M	SD	N	t-score	p
Supervising Teacher	8.92	4.1	43	1.23	.22
College Supervisor	7.69	3.4	29		

$p > .05$

Hypothesis # 9 which stated that there would be a significant positive relationship between the variables measured by the survey was analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlations. Significant positive relations ($p < .001$) were found between all variables measured by the survey (see table # 8). Hypothesis # 9 was accepted.

Table # 8

The Relationships between the Variables Measured by the Survey

	Communications	Vision Knowledge	Conflict Management	Administrative Ability	Decisiveness Judgment
Human Relations	.88	.64	.61	.80	.79
Communications		.81	.67	.87	.83
Vision/Knowledge			.79	.88	.73
Conflict Management				.77	.71
Administrative Ability					.83

$p < .001$

Discussion

As was expected, the frequency with which college supervisors and supervising teachers use negative behaviors was minimal. The averages indicate that there are no problems with these behaviors. Individual item analysis, however, was quite revealing in some instances. For example, one student viewed the college supervisor's overall behavior positively, but responded with an "always" on the behavior "uses reward and coercion to motivate me" and "tells me to make due with what I have." Another student, who viewed the supervising teacher's behavior positively, responded with an "always" on the behavior "has not supported me when parents were involved" and "corrects me in front of others instead of privately." While the overall behaviors are positive, 28 of the 43 students responded "always" or "often" to one or more of the 49 negative behaviors. Also based on the data, five of the 43 students were working in a supervisory climate that was not positive because they responded that negative behaviors were used more than 50% of the time. One student responded "always" or "often" on 44 of 49 negative behaviors. While the aggregate data shows a very positive supervisory climate, individual data and data on individual items is quite revealing in terms of some supervisory behaviors that might be improved.

The rejection of the hypothesis that there would be no overall difference in the behaviors associated with negative behaviors for college supervisors and supervising teachers was not expected. A partial explanation for this may be that there is a lot more history between the college supervisors and student teachers since they have been interacting for a greater length of time. At the time the survey was administered, the student teachers and supervising teachers had been together about two months. The college supervisor and

student teachers had been together since the start of the school year or about seven months. This could have caused a better relationship and a more positive supervisory climate.

While there were no differences in the supervisory behaviors of college supervisors and supervising teachers associated with human relations and communications skills, there were some revealing situations when looking at individual items and individual data. For example, my supervisor "fails to compliment me" and "fails to delegate responsibilities" were the two human relations behaviors receiving the highest scores. The behavior "fails to delegate responsibilities" could have been a behavior for the administrative skills climate variable, but it was included with human relations because it was believed that a lack of trust was the reason for this behavior. An example under communications were the behaviors "My supervising teacher does not model professional and positive communication skills" and "gossips about other teachers and administrators." Nineteen of the 43 student teachers responded positively to these two behaviors. Conversely, it can be said that 24 student teachers responded that their supervising teacher "never" or "seldom" used these behaviors.

The finding that there is a difference in behaviors associated with vision and knowledge between the supervising teachers and the college supervisor was expected. Since the college supervisors have doctorate degrees in pedagogy and have been training and preparing the student teachers to enter the teaching profession, their vision and knowledge base should have been recognized as superior to that of the supervising teacher. This is not to say that the supervising teachers were not viewed as having strengths in these areas. Their score of 14.5 indicates that the average response for the nine behaviors on this variable was "always or often."

The aggregate data for "conflict management," "administrative ability," and "decisiveness" and "judgment" show no significant differences in the use of negative behaviors. Individual data and individual items in response to the behavior of supervising teachers, however, reveal some behaviors that are worth further investigation. For example, the most frequently reported negative behavior in the "conflict management" variable was "my supervising teacher shrugs off problems or concerns." The most frequently reported negative behavior in the "administrative skills" area was "My supervising teacher fails to involve me in decisions." Under "decisiveness/judgment" the most frequently reported behavior was "My supervising teacher makes snap judgments."

The significant positive relationships in all the variables associated with supervisory climate indicate that a positive change in any one variable is likely to result in a positive change in the other variables. Since most of the negative behaviors are not used, this makes the item analysis very important. College supervisors in working with supervising teachers and student teachers to improve the supervisory climate need to address those behaviors that are negatively influencing the supervisory climate. By addressing these problem areas improvements in all areas are likely to result.

Uses of the Survey

This instrument has the capability of serving as a tool to facilitate placement of student teachers. Administered at a point part way through the student teaching process, it can serve as a means of identifying student teachers who are misplaced or are experiencing difficulty relating to their college supervisor or supervising teacher. If a negative supervisory climate is discovered, a decision would have to be made to change the placement or address the negative behaviors identified by the survey instrument.

If the problem is the supervising teacher, and a decision is made to work with that person, confidentiality must be considered. The validity of the data would be jeopardized if the student knew that it was going to be shared with the supervising teacher. Consequently, any decision to share the data and work with the supervising teacher should be done only with the consent of the student teacher. Without the student teacher's consent, the college supervisor would have to work with supervising teacher as a facilitator to address the problem behaviors without revealing that the information came from the student teacher.

Conclusions

The supervisory climate between student teachers and college and classroom supervisors is a key factor affecting their ability to become effective teachers. The research revealed that college professors used fewer negative behaviors (1.17 to 1.66) than supervising teachers (1.33 to 2.35) in supervising student teachers. While the frequency of negative behaviors on behalf of college supervisors and classroom supervising teachers is minimal, careful monitoring is still advised. A healthy supervisory climate for student teachers is one step toward training more effective teachers. According to Pipho (1998), more effective teachers should result in improved student learning.

The survey is a useful tool for identifying those student teachers who are placed in a poor supervisory climate. Additionally, the survey is a valuable tool for identifying supervisory behaviors that are interfering with the development of a healthy supervisory climate. Data from the survey can help a college supervisor decide which student teacher placements require further observations and time commitments. Since time is a limited resource, it is important to use it wisely. The authors believe that the data from this survey will help college supervisors use their time more wisely.

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A SURVEY OF THE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF COLLEGE SUPERVISORS AND SUPERVISING TEACHERS

Part I--Demographics

Directions: Respond to each item by filling in the blank on the computer scan sheet which most accurately describes you.

1. **Location of Position**

   A. elementary school
   B. middle school
   C. high school
   D. vocational/technical
   E. other

2. **Level of Preparation**

   A. Bachelor's Degree
   B. Master's Degree
   C. Specialist's Degree
   D. Doctorate Degree
   E. Other

3. **Total Years of Teaching Experience**

   A. 0 - 5
   B. 6 - 10
   C. 11 - 15

D. 16 - 20

E. 21+

4. **Gender**

A. female B. male

Part II--Survey items

Directions: Use the scale below to respond to each item by filling in the blank on the computer scan sheet for the response which comes closest to **describing how often you see your college supervisor or supervising teacher exhibit this behavior.**

A	B	C	D	E
NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS

5. My supervisor displays a lack of trust.
6. My supervisor demonstrates an uncaring attitude.
7. My supervisor fails to provide positive reinforcement.
8. My supervisor fails to circulate with other staff.
9. My supervisor remains distant.
10. My supervisor does not call me by name.
11. My supervisor fails to delegate responsibilities.
12. My supervisor fails to compliment me.
13. My supervisor uses reward and coercion to motivate me.
14. My supervisor does not listen.
15. My supervisor fails to use eye contact.
16. My supervisor fails to provide feedback regarding my teaching.

17. My supervisor corrects me in front of others instead of privately.
18. My supervisor does not model professional and positive communication skills.
19. My supervisor has failed to keep a confidence.
20. My supervisor gossips about other teachers or administrators.
21. My supervisor shows favoritism to pupils in the class.
22. My supervisor has double standards.
23. My supervisor has not supported me when parents were involved.
24. My supervisor demonstrates a lack of vision.
25. My supervisor lacks knowledge about the curriculum.
26. My supervisor lacks knowledge about instructional strategies.
27. My supervisor is partial to influential parents.
28. My supervisor supports me even if I am wrong.
29. My supervisor is afraid to question his/her supervisors.
30. My supervisor shrugs off or devalues a problem or concern.
31. My supervisor "passes the buck" rather than dealing with a situation.
32. My supervisor has forgotten what it is like to be a student teacher.
33. My supervisor frequently interrupts my teaching.
34. My supervisor assigns too much paperwork.
35. My supervisor tells teachers to make due with what they have.
36. My supervisor assigns duty during planning period.
37. My supervisor "nit picks" on evaluations.
38. My supervisor expects paperwork to be done "yesterday" with no notice.
39. My supervisor overemphasizes control.
40. My supervisor fails to delegate.
41. My supervisor fails to involve me in decisions.

42. My supervisor uses the words "I" and "my" too frequently.
43. My supervisor is rigid and unflexible.
44. My supervisor applies procedures inconsistently.
45. My supervisor does not hold people accountable.
46. My supervisor fails to follow up.
47. My supervisor has rules but does not always enforce them.
48. My supervisor makes "snap judgments."
49. My supervisor only listens to one side of the story and makes a decision.
50. My supervisor implements the latest fads without thorough knowledge.
51. My supervisor bases evaluations on a short observation.
52. My supervisor takes action too quickly.
53. My supervisor develops policies as "knee jerk" reactions to an incident.